BX
2182
.J75

JULIE ST ESPRIT SR 099209
SPIRITUAL PASTELS
BTQ-2579
J94

St. Joseph's College
Overbrook, Penna.

RULES

1. Books may be kept two weeks and may be renewed once for the same period, except 7 day books and magazines.

2. A fine of two cents a day will be charged on each book which is not returned according to the above rule. No book will be issued to any person incurring such a fine until it has been paid.

3. All injuries to books beyond reasonable wear and all losses shall be made good to the satisfaction of the Librarian.

4. Each borrower is held responsible for all books drawn on his card and for all fines accruing on the same.

Nihil obstat

ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D.

Censor Librorum

Imprimatur

✠ JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY

Archbishop of New York

SPIRITUAL PASTELS

CHRIST COMING DOWN FROM THE PRETORIUM

SPIRITUAL PASTELS

HEART TALKS AND MEDITATIONS

BX
2182
.J95

BY
J. S. E.

Julie du St. Esprit, sister

ILLUSTRATED

99209

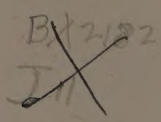
NEW YORK
THE DEVIN-ADAIR COMPANY

RELEASE
BTQ 2179 .J94
Spiritual pastels;
3 9353 00101 3893

COPYRIGHT, 1918, BY
THE DEVIN-ADAIR CO.

All rights reserved by The Devin-Adair Co.

Third Edition
Fourth Edition
Fifth Edition



IN MEMORY OF

MY BELOVED FATHER

WHOSE EXAMPLE OF SOLID CHRISTIAN VIRTUE
HAS EVER BEEN TO ME A POWERFUL
INSPIRATION

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	FOREWORD	xi
I.	"THEY KNEW HIM IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD"	1
II.	"THE SHEEP HEAR HIS VOICE"	3
III.	THE PICTURE	7
IV.	ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST	11
V.	BEATITUDE	15
VI.	CHRIST KNOCKS	21
VII.	THANKSGIVING AFTER HOLY COMMUNION	29
VIII.	WHAT DOES IT MEAN?	35
IX.	THE FOUNTAIN	39
X.	"AND HE CALLETH HIS OWN SHEEP BY NAME, AND LEADETH THEM OUT"	47
XI.	"THOU KNOWEST NOT NOW, BUT THOU SHALT KNOW HEREAFTER"	49
XII.	PEACE	53
XIII.	CHRIST DRIVES OUT THE BUYERS AND SELLERS	59
XIV.	"HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST DECREASE"	63

CHAPTER		PAGE
XV.	"Behold, I Am with You"	65
XVI.	"And Seeing Them Laboring in Rowing"	69
XVII.	Christ Looking Over Jerusalem	73
XVIII.	By the Roadside	77
XIX.	Crushed? And Then?	83
XX.	Extract from a Letter	87
XXI.	"Only Believe"	91
XXII.	The Invitation	93
XXIII.	"Behold the Lamb of God"	97
XXIV.	A Counsel	103
XXV.	Reeds	107
XXVI.	Only a Voice	113
XXVII.	The Lights Along the Shore	115
XXVIII.	"But Christ Did Not Show Himself Until the Fourth Watch of the Night"	123
XXIX.	Way of the Cross	127

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHRIST COMING DOWN FROM THE PRETORIUM *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT 7

CHRIST KNOCKS 21

CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA . . . 39

CHRIST, FROM THE PAINTING BY HOFFMAN . . 65

CONSOLATION 83

CHRIST RAISING THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS . . 91

CHRIST AND ST. PETER 93

CHRIST AND THE RICH YOUNG MAN 103

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST AS A BOY 113

CHRIST LOOKING OUT OVER THE SEA 115

"LORD, SAVE ME!" 123

THE SEPULCHRE 127

FOREWORD

THE Pastel has been likened for delicacy of beauty to "the colored dust upon the velvet of butterflies' wings." This method of painting has been much used by well-known artists. You see it at its best in their landscapes and sunsets and portraits. It charms you because of its unique freshness of color, its tenderness, its elegance and exquisite depth of tone.

Here, dear Reader, you have the reason for the title of this booklet, "Spiritual Pastels." These miniature sketches of the soul have all the qualities of the Pastel. They are for your heart what the Pastel is for your eye. This is why they are also called by the longer name, "Heart Talks and Meditations"; for this is what they were for the author. She intended them only for herself. They were heart-to-heart talks with

her Beloved, that she might be drawn closer and closer to Him. And this is what they have been to many others, religious, Christian mothers and Children of Mary who were privileged to read them before there was any thought of their publication.

They found these silent outpourings of a devout soul inspiringly practical, true Pastels, portraying the needs, the failings, and the virtues of the human heart with vivid freshness, tenderness of touch, and exquisite depth of love. They are published now with the hope that He for Whom the author wrote them may trace in many hearts the indelible Pastel of His own most sacred Heart.

JOSEPH M. WOODS, S.J.

WOODSTOCK COLLEGE,
St. Agnes Day,
January 21, 1918.

SPIRITUAL PASTELS

SPIRITUAL PASTELS

I

"THEY KNEW HIM IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD"

"And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight."

St. Luke xxiv, 31

And he vanished.

THIS is the secret of all our sorrows—*separation*. I cannot say *loss* because we never lose anything that is good. We are separated from it only for a while, then God gives it back to us, sometimes in this life, sometimes only in heaven. So it is separation which is our deepest pain. Christ slipped away from the two disciples just when they recognized their Treasure. It was hard, was it not? But before He left

them, He enlightened them and strengthened them. Our whole life here on earth is a series of withdrawals, and they seem cruel to us at times. But not so. We forget that we are being fashioned for heaven, equipped for a beautiful, eternal court-life where everything is the essence of refinement and exquisite perfection. Think of the tremendous training required for this! Everything on which we lean and in which we find delight is apt to make us less energetic, unless it be our one great Support and our Delight exceeding great—Jesus Christ.

So Our Blessed Lord removes it for just a little space and then gives it all back to us in eternity, where there is no fear of marring our beauty, where there is no chance of tarnishing our priceless gold, where no dust can dull the fullness of our vision, where our friendships of earth will be intensified, and where Our Blessed Lord will give Himself to us without measure and without interruption.

Let us be patient and trust Him.

II

"THE SHEEP HEAR HIS VOICE"

St. John x, 3

HAVE I grown familiar with the Voice of Christ? Do I recognize it in the depth of my heart, urging me on to beautiful acts, noble aspirations? Is there any other voice with which I am more familiar, any voice discordant with the Voice of Christ? Is there a voice urging me to assert my rights? Is there a voice crying out that I have been wronged, that I have not been treated squarely? Is there a voice bidding me seek praise and notice and appreciation? Is there a voice discouraging me against trying to become spiritual?

And what is Christ saying all this time?

Christ is silent. He could not be heard amid all this confusion. His Voice is sweet

and soft and low. His Voice brings peace, but that other voice disturbs and agitates.

Christ whispers.

"Seek no rights. Judge every one's motives to be noble and true and great. Every wrong and every injustice make you dearer to Me. The more you are hidden, unappreciated, unnoticed, the more truly do I take up My abode in you and value every act you perform and notice the slightest effort to be good.

"And, my child, I put into your touch a healing power over the miseries of life. I give to your words an influence and a strength, and in your very look I shed a flood of sympathy and love that are balm to the stricken heart.

"Strive to be spiritual. It is for this you are a follower of Me. Many things will attract you more than the spiritual life, everything else is easier than the spiritual life, but be courageous enough to set them all aside, and little by little the interior life

will absorb you, will satisfy you, and you will long for nothing else. All this means great effort and an amount of suffering, but I am with you. I stand by your side, my child, unseen 'tis true, but ever strengthening, guiding, and encouraging. The time will not be long before you shall see my smile of approval and hear my words of love unending, and enjoy the happiness of eternal life."

III

THE PICTURE

FROM childhood to old age the words and actions of others play an important part in the private studio of the soul. We take from them the coloring for our picture, and unless our brush dip often into the soft tints of the Master, our life-work is apt to have hard lines and colors that do not blend. It is the blending of color, the softening of outline, that give to our picture the Royal Seal and win for it a place in the Studio of the Divine Artist.

We must work the colors of pain and sorrow in such a way as to bring out the richness that lies hidden in their sombre pigments. Whatever wounds us, whatever disappoints us, let us take hold of and draw from it its sweetness; for there is a hidden

sweetness in everything, and finding it is in the power of every soul. When the quest seems hopeless let us turn to the Life of Christ, where there is always some instance corresponding to our need; and the longer we keep our pain or trial or disappointment sheltered in the arms of Silence—sweet and patient Silence—the stronger and more beautiful do we become.

Our Blessed Lady kept all things in her heart—*all* things, and the use she put them to sanctified her. Life takes on such a different aspect when we determine to utilize everything that comes our way—pleasure and pain—for our sanctification. Sanctity is the most exquisite of pictures. It alone delights the Eye of Christ; it alone adorns the walls of eternity. Only there can we appreciate the value of its lights and shadows and the softening influence of the Master's touch. Here in our earthly studio the coloring is crude betimes and the outlines a trifle sharp; but, like the works of the artists of old, time mellows our picture, and little by little it

grows softer and richer, the hard lines being lost in the warm glow of eternity. Here the fogs and mists are many and the actions of others are distorted by their unsteady light. In eternity our imperfections, as well as those of others, will have vanished. There we shall become acquainted. Each one's beauty will stand out resplendent in the soft light of God's mercy and love. Why not try now to look upon people as we shall know them in eternity? Why not think of them now as we shall think of them then? Why not speak to them now as we shall speak to them then? Speak kindly. Think nobly. We are the gainers. We have a great work to do. We have but one canvas. Our colors are given to us day by day. Let us use them all. Some are beautiful in themselves, others need a bit of blending to bring out their beauty; but when the work is finished the Divine Artist will bid us lay down our brush and put aside the colors, and will take our picture to have it framed in the gold of heaven's light, with the

Royal Seal upon it, bearing this inscription in letters that time cannot efface nor the rust of ages rob of its splendor:

"Love's Silent Conquest."

IV

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

"There went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the country about the Jordan, and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins."
ST. MATTHEW iii, 5

ST. JOHN the Baptist was the most popular man of his time, and perhaps the most popular of any time. Where else do we read any instance of a man whom the entire population of cities went out to meet? Not only the poor sought him, but the rich; not only the sinner, but the saint; not only the proud, but the humble. And why? To be baptized by him and to confess their sins. To become better and to unburden themselves of their loads. And what attracted them? Did St. John strive to draw them to himself? No; but from the desert of

Judea travelled the influence of his goodness and was felt in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and in the country round the Jordan.

How was the heart of St. John affected by all this notice and applause? When one's heart rotates on the axis of Divine Love, applause, fame, popularity, and esteem may revolve around it without in the slightest degree affecting it. St. John's life had been one of complete abnegation, constant self-restraint, severe mortification, and dominating it all was his one ideal—to prepare souls for Christ.

If I were loved and praised and sought after, what effect would it have upon me? When I meet with success, when I am taken notice of, how do I act? Do I lose my recollection? Do I grow talkative, eager to speak of my success? When I do not succeed, when I am not praised, how do I act? Am I irritable, gloomy, morose? If I am popular, why is it? Is it because I am good, sympathetic, strong, meek, and humble? Are people drawn to me in the hope of be-

coming better? Do they find what they seek? Popularity, praise, appreciation, success are attended with danger until our hearts rotate on the axis of God's love. This requires heroism. But will we not be Christ's heroes? In St. John there was nothing remaining of self; he was all Christ. No wonder souls flocked to him; no wonder they opened to him their innermost hearts. Has my life up to the present moment been successful?

Success means sanctity.

V

BEATITUDE

"FEED them," Christ says. "Go to the relief of the starving world. Give it to eat and to drink. Bathe the fevered lips. Ease the throbbing pulse. Calm the restless heart."

Christ bids *me* do all this, and I stand before Him, bewildered, helpless, starving, and as fever-parched as the multitude about me. . . . Is there sadness in Christ's face as He looks upon my pinched and starving soul?

"My child, have you nothing to give the hungry multitude? You to whom I have given so much, are you not able to satisfy its poverty from the wealth I have lavished upon you?

"Are you, too, striving to slake your

thirst at the pools of success, consideration, self-indulgence, and applause?"

What can I answer?

Look at the great pageant of humanity travelling the Road of Life, halting here, loitering there, peering into the windows of Life in search of Happiness. It struggles up the mountains of success. It stands in the Arena of Fame. It plunges into the mines of Knowledge. It stretches out its palsied hand for the glitter of Wealth. It feasts at the Table of Pleasure, and lo! disappointment—despair!

Am I there?

If so, what a travesty!

I can almost hear the hisses and the jeering of the crowd.

It is no wonder that the multitude thronged about our Lord on that eventful day when, seeing the hungry of heart running hither and thither in quest of happiness, He called out in His sweet, persuasive tone:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit." How long, how very long it takes us to understand! One's entire life is sometimes not sufficient in which to learn it. We came into the world with thirst for happiness. Even before we reach the age of reason we grasp at all things labelled (falsely or otherwise) "happiness." We were created to know, love, and serve God in this world and to be happy with Him forever in the next. There is no promise of happiness here, but we come as close to happiness as it is possible in this life by working for *future* happiness, and this means—

Poverty of spirit.

St. Francis of Assisi says, "He who, when struck on one cheek, can turn the other, is poor in spirit." Poverty of spirit comes to us through toil and pain. In our early years, when we first start out on our quest for happiness, we cast our eyes upon whatever looks bright. We seek to quench our thirst at every limpid stream. Many who knock at our door are bidden enter, and our souls

worship at the shrines of Beauty, Wealth, and Power. When lo! the glitter grows faint, the stream runs dry, and our hearts' guests weary us, beauty fades, wealth vanishes, and power is but a name.

There are ruins all about us, disappointments and pain follow in their wake. But the heart will not be daunted, so again the disappointed heart tries anew and builds its castles upon these shattered ruins, only to see again heaps of débris scattered on the ground—the ground of the aching, bleeding heart. So our life goes on until, through prayer and pain and suffering, the great Light shines upon and penetrates our intellect and we understand—we really understand that we can come near to happiness in this life only through detachment and prayer.

Prayer is a necessity because were we to have strength sufficient to disengage ourselves from everything transitory, we might still be hard, arrogant—cruel, even; but de-

tachment, through prayer, is perfect, attractive, holy.

Not only is it perfect, but we are then so poor in spirit that we love that from which we are detached. We love individuals tenderly, deeply, magnanimously. We are great powers for good. Our love is gold, fire-tried. Our strength has been crushed in the wine-press of humiliation and has come forth divine. Our sympathy is the blossom of sorrow, and its fragrance soothes all wounds. Our charity is born of God and is without limit.

This is true poverty of spirit.

It all sounds very beautiful, and it *is* beautiful, but the process is a long one, not because God wills it so, for surely He does all He can to show us the truth of things, but because our intellects are darkened and our hearts gross, therefore for years we dance the merry dance from one attraction to another, only to be disappointed. There is but one remedy—constant communing

with the great Teacher. It is impossible—I repeat it, impossible—to commune with Him and remain ignorant of the values of Life; impossible to be blind to the worth of creatures after the finger of Christ has touched our dull, filmy sight.

Once the eye is perfect, all else comes right. When disappointments come, it is a proof that the Master has touched our poor, weak eyes. When heart-aches sadden and depress us, it is an evidence that the merciful Surgeon has cut away some idol.

To recognize this is in itself a grace for which an eternal hymn of thanksgiving is not too much—a song of gratitude to the beautiful Lord whose glory is our sanctification realized and made resplendent through Poverty of Spirit.

VI

CHRIST KNOCKS

"Behold, I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." APOCALYPSE iii, 20.

OVER the great Road of Life the Lord of the world doth wander, night and day. Before each heart-door He begs for admittance. Watch Him as He walks up the lane and taps with infinite tenderness on the crimson casements of the throbbing pulses of the world. Before some He stands and waits; moss-covered are the steps and mouldy is the casement; there is no life within, no response to the loving Knocker, who sadly turns away. Through lordly mansion-gates He passes, and on the marble

steps before the heavy oaken door He stands expectant. Music and song and laughter reach the Saviour's ears. He knocks, but no one hears; so, heart-sore and weary, He moves away.

Other doors are ivy-clad and weed-entangled. Who cares enough for the lonely Pilgrim to tear down the vine and uproot the weeds of many, many years?

Thus along the Road of Life the eager but thwarted Beggar Divine makes His way and with trust and fear commingled taps upon the heart of every one, young and old, rich and poor, good and bad.

Did they but realize the meaning of that touch, they would open their doors and Christ would enter, and He would sup with them, and their hearts would be transformed into living temples wherein would dwell the Source of Goodness and of Love.

Christ never takes us by surprise, but knocks and waits for our reply. A great moment this, when the eager, expectant

Saviour awaits the welcome He will receive!

Let us grow familiar with the Master's gentle knock. It is ever the same, but the garb of the Saviour varies, and there is danger lest we mistake His guise and keep Him waiting—mayhap bid Him go away.

He comes in the dress of a Merchant. He shows us His pearls, His gold, and bids us trade. Our gold has not been fire-tried. Our pearls are of human make. Now this traffic entails pain—this transfer means suffering. It means trial by fire. To wean us from what we believe to be true, from what our imperfect sight tells us is gold, disappointment is inevitable,—disappointment in our work, in our friends, in ourselves.

When these disappointments come, it is the knock of Our Lord at our heart's poor gate—the Divine Merchant holding out to us His wares. Let us not hesitate. Let us not hide behind the casement. Let us open wide the door and bid Him enter.

Again He tarries at our lattice—a Physician come to heal our wounds—the gashed and bleeding wounds of disappointment, the sting of an unkind word, the ulcer of discouragement and futile, hopeless effort. Into these wounds our tender Physician pours the oil of forgiveness, sympathy, and love, asking that we turn to those who may have caused the wounds and pour from our heart into theirs the forgiveness, sympathy, and love with which He has enriched us.

Can we refuse?

Now, when He comes to our door as our great and trusted Surgeon, let us open wide the door. He comes to cut away whatever may hinder our growth or weaken our vitality. They may not seem hindrances to us. We may deem them helps, but the Surgeon knoweth best, and while His heart grieves to cause us pain, He cuts—and our only anæsthetic is that of trust.

With this done, we are able to greet Him on the morrow when, as a Shepherd, He

stands, crook in hand, and bids us go with Him in quest of starving sheep. Oh, the heart-hunger that goes unfed! Oh, the hundreds that come to our door seeking help, light, strength, encouragement, kindness, sympathy, love, forgiveness!

Are we ready? Have we all these heart-treasures? We have, if Christ has entered in and supped with us. Our Shepherd looks for this from us. Shall we disappoint Him?

Lastly, a King halts at our door and knocks. A King! Eagerly we draw the bolt and lift the latch. But lo! never was there king like this—thorn-crowned, poorly-clad, and foot-sore. He asks to be our King, to reign over our hearts, but before He steps across the threshold He whispers:

"My kingdom is not of this world."

Not of this world!

What a disappointment!

Shall we, then, bid Him enter?

Can we wait for the future kingdom?

Can we tread with Him the wine-press?

Can we live without shelter, without comfort, without possession?

Can we bear ourselves as princes while decked in none of their trappings?

Can we stand by our disfigured King, calmly and patiently, sharing with Him His poverty and abandonment? Then assuredly He will come in and sup with us, sanctify us, change us into Himself, and after that He will take us to sup with Him for all eternity.

What then shall we think of the paltry things of life? How then shall we look upon the scars and wounds of our Surgeon's knife —His pruning-knife, that made our journey swifter towards eternity? What then will matter the paper throne, the tinselled sceptre, and the gilded crown of royalty? Nothing will matter then but that we have walked along the Road of Life with our Divine Pilgrim, that our heart-door has always stood ajar that He might enter, and that we have shared His fare, His hardships, and His disappointments.

What a beautiful record!

Therefore, when Christ knocks, no matter what His garb may be, let Him in; let Him abide with us; let Him reign over us, and the souls we shall thereby gain for Him will be our reward exceeding great.

VII

THANKSGIVING AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

JESUS, my dear and loving Lord, I adore Thee here within my breast. In this poor weak heart of mine I hold the Friend, the best and dearest.

Here, beneath my folded hands, is He who by His touch cured all diseases of soul and body.

I thank Thee, O my loving Lord, for visiting me. I would beg that Thou rest with me forever, that Thou make of my heart a dwelling-place, a shelter from the cold and indifference of the world.

Give me light to know Thee, a strong desire to study Thee in every detail of Thy beautiful life. Help me to imitate Thy patience with all about Thee—the sick, the ir-

ritable, the fault-finding, the exacting, the rude and vulgar.

Give me Thy sweet gentleness in the events of life,—in disappointments, thoughtlessness of others, insincerity of those I trusted, unfaithfulness of those I loved. Help me to be faithful to do what is right, no matter what the cost may be.

Teach me, my dearest Lord, to put myself aside, to think of the happiness of others, to hide my little pains and heart-aches, so that I alone may suffer from them.

Make me strong, my own dear Lord, that I may be a solace and a comfort to those about me, that I may bring help to those in need, sympathy to the suffering heart, happiness to those in sorrow, peace to the troubled, and strength to the weak.

How happy I should be, my Lord, could I bring souls to know Thee more truly, to serve Thee more faithfully, and to love Thee more ardently. Give me this one supreme favor, dearest Lord, that I may grow to be like Thee, that my heart may resemble Thine in

its beautiful kindness towards others, that each day may bring me closer to Thee, my beloved Friend, my King, my Lord,—closer to Thee, whom I wish to serve cheerfully and faithfully to the end.

My dearest Lord, humbly I thank Thee for accepting my poor heart as Thy resting-place. How good of Thee, my dearest Saviour, to come to me who think so seldom of Thee, who pass so little time with Thee, whose friendship would make my life so beautiful. Now that Thou art with me, dearest Lord, I beg Thee to give light to my soul, that I may see the path on which Thou wishest I should travel to eternity. Touch my eyes, that I may see the good there is for me to do, the weaknesses that should be strengthened, and the empty places that should be filled with kindness and thoughtfulness for others. Bless my lips, that I may keep them sealed when they are burning with impatience or ill-will. Give me the grace, my beloved Lord, to make of my life some-

thing worth while, to distinguish the true from the false, gold from tinsel, Thy beautiful standards from the deceitful maxims of the world. Give me the grace to recognize Thy touch when Thou knockest at my heart's poor gate, that I may always open wide the door and welcome Thee, the lonely Pilgrim who travels up and down the Road of Life, who stands before each heart-door begging for admittance.

Grant that I may never keep Thee waiting, dearest Lord. No matter how loud may be the music, song, and laughter of the world, let me hear Thy gentle knock and open to Thee.

How filled soever may be my garden with the flowers of wealth and pleasure, let there be no weeds choking the entrance to my heart-door, but with my hand ever on the latch watching for Thy coming, let me greet Thee with love and reverence and keep Thee with me as my Guest, my Friend, my King. My Guest, whom it will be my happiness to serve by doing for others all that kindness

and sympathy may prompt. My Friend, sharing all with Thee, dearest Lord,—sharing Thy cross in what form soever it may come, being patient in disappointments, sweet and cheerful in suffering.

Lastly, my King, by letting Thee reign over my heart, that all I say or do may bear the stamp of Thy strong and beautiful influence, that when the Great Day comes when I shall stand face to face with Thee, my dearest Saviour, I may see Thy smile of approval and receive the assurance that my life has been a success, and that I shall be with Thee for all eternity.

VIII

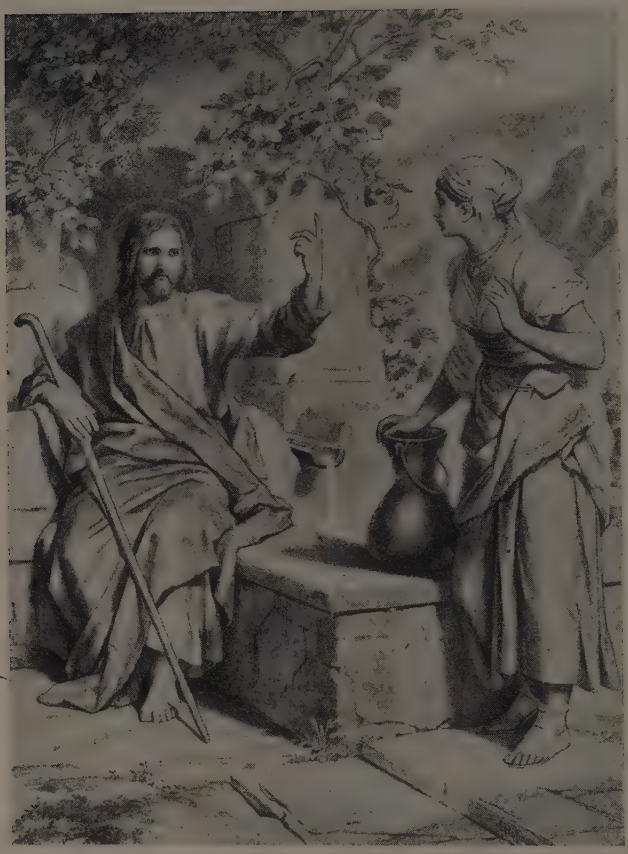
WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

THIS was the question I asked myself years and years ago, as I stood alone before a bush covered with exquisite roses. I was quite young, and the day had only just dawned, when I strolled alone through a beautifully laid out garden rich in flowering shrubs and shaded by magnificent trees. I say I was alone and perhaps a trifle lonely, as one can be at almost any milestone. In deep thought, I turned my steps to a quiet spot leading to a terraced walk bordered on either side by trees and shrubs and blossoms. On my left rose a brick wall to which thick ivy clung; on my right had been built a handsome stone parapet running the whole length of the terrace and overlooking the

garden scene beneath. Against this mass of stonework grew the rose-bush which has figured so largely in my spiritual life, and to which I owe some of the sweet moments of my life and the solution of problems that cleared away the mists that otherwise might have enshrouded me in darkness when most I needed light. As I lingered, feasting my soul on the exceptional beauty of its flowers, my eye caught sight of a blossom, exquisite in its lonely splendor and almost entirely hidden from view between a mass of green and the stone parapet. This rose appeared to me to be the most beautiful of the many on the bush, and it was then that I said to myself: "What does it mean?" Why should the most exquisitely wrought flower be hidden away? Why should it have bloomed at all? I dare say I am the only one who ever saw that rose,—and I was only a child. But that rose has never died, and although for years it kept the answer to my question locked up in its fragrant heart, it did answer me at last.

I thank you, little Flower, for the lesson you have taught me. What has kept you so fresh all these years? Did our Blessed Lord Himself water you? Your fragrance has never lost its sweetness; it has lived in my heart and gives perfume to many odorless things along my pathway. It has taken me many years to understand fully the lesson you gave me; still it has been working its way into my very soul and shedding a glow on the commonplaces of life.

Our Lord put you there for me, little Flower. He made you beautiful for me, and now, little Flower, you shall come with me to heaven; for you have struck deep root in my soul, and though you are as yet no more than a bud, you will be in full bloom when Our Blessed Lord shall come to gather blossoms from the garden of my soul. Then, little Flower, you shall have your reward for the sweet, silent lesson you spoke to me years and years ago.



IX

THE FOUNTAIN

St. John iv

I

THE hush of eventide steals in upon the land. Softly the sun sheds its light on tree and shrub and flower. Yellow cornfields bend beneath the weight of ripened grain, and poppies on the hillside toss crimson kisses to the ferns and fragrant grasses. Mountain-peak and valley, olive grove and feathered pine, thatched roof and palace gate bathe in the mellow glow as the sun drops behind the purple mists of twilight.

Nestled in the bosom of all this loveliness, hedged in by the rugged hills of Samaria, lies the pretty town of Sichar. Retired and apart, yet not too distant from the traffic of the town, is Jacob's Well, overhung with ivy,

while here and there a patch of soft green moss clings lovingly to the gray and sombre stones. Here sits a lonely Figure, beautiful to behold, but sad in His unrivalled loneliness. His eyes look out over the sea of ripened wheat, upon the olive and the fig tree, and a yet deeper sadness shadows that careworn, lovely Face. . . . This is Jesus, who, being weary, sat thus beside the well.

Weary, sweet Lord!—and why? Weary knocking? Weary calling? Weary begging? Weary asking for admission to the temple of the heart? Weary calling for guests to fill your banquet-hall? Weary begging for love, for friends, for helpers in the great harvest-fields of the world?

II

Up from the city, along the silent road, comes another figure, a woman carrying an empty water-jar, for she is thirsty and she needs must climb the hill to drink at Jacob's Well.

A charming picture this, a solitary woman bathed in the softness of the evening glow, a face of beauty, grace in every movement of her slender form.

Nay, not beautiful, for on the highways of life she unfurls the banner of shame and leads her followers to ruin and destruction. Her silken skirts trail in the dance-halls of vice. Her sandalled feet walk the paths of sin. She drinks from the fetid pools of forbidden pleasure and feeds her famished heart on the husks of carnal love. She has reached the well and stands before the weary, careworn Saviour, the sad, disheartened Saviour, the dethroned and silent King, the unrequited Lover of her heart, but she knows Him not! How can she know Him? In her brilliant, sparkling eyes there is no sight, and beneath her snow-white bosom throbs a palsied, sickened heart.

"Give me to drink!"

Nature holds its breath, the music of the water dies away, the birds hush their warble,

even the flowers murmur in their sleep. Christ begs for a drink from the poisoned chalice of her heart!

"How is it that Thou askest of me to drink?" she says.

How is it, indeed, sweet Lord? What thirst is this that forces such a request? Ah! I understand. Thou wouldst put Thy blessed lips to this foul heart to suck from it the poison of its reeking ulcer; yea, thou wouldst drain it to the dregs—dregs of misery and of woe.

O blind one of Sichar, knowest thou not Him who speakest to thee? Canst thou not catch the music of this Voice, thou whose ears are attuned to the song of revelry, the soft strains of flattery, and the tinkling cymbal of empty love and praise?

No; thine ears are deaf to the harmony of this music, dead to the melody of heavenly sounds, and thy lustrous eyes are blind to thy Saviour's beauty, blind to the crystal waters of His heart; they can but gaze on

the fetid stream of the wells of polluted love and sordid gain.

"Sir, Thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep."

It is true. The Saviour has nothing wherein to draw. He, the Fountain of Eternal Life, what need has He to draw from the fever-stricken heart-wells, sin-stagnant and diseased?

Drink, daughter of Samaria, drink from the pools of pleasure, luxury, and guilt, and thou shalt thirst eternally. Lave thy throbbing, aching temples in the sluggish waters of stupor and forgetfulness, and thou shalt wake to the shrieks of deepest hell. Quaff the red wine of degraded love and the nectar of licentious feasting, and thou shalt die of thirst while living, and thy festered heart will mock the hunger of thy love.

Come, drink from the Fountain of thy Saviour. Slake thy thirst at the Well of Living Water, and thy parched lips will burn no more, thou shalt be satiated and content.

"Sir, give me of this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw."

Behold! The Divine Lover is making His way into the heart of the sinner.

She asks of *Him.*

She, too, is weary,—weary of the never-ending thirst, weary of the ceaseless labor, the futile effort to find refreshment in the turbid pools of sin.

Then Christ, in the exquisite delicacy of His touch, lays His finger upon the ulcers of her heart, the putrid leprosy of sin, and the veil from her eyes is lifted, the mists fade away, and she begins to recognize the thirsty Traveller at the well. She believes He is a prophet, and then, as her interest increases and her eagerness intensifies, Christ reveals Himself to her, saying, "I am the Saviour who speaks with thee!"

The woman thereupon left her water-pot and went her way into the city to invite the men to come to Christ. What need had she of her water-pot, she whose heart Christ

had filled with the Water of Life, which was to become in her a fountain springing up into life everlasting? Yes, she left at the feet of the Saviour her broken bowl, her empty pitcher, her shattered life-vessel that could hold no water, and from these crumbling ruins sprang a *new* life, an ardent, holy love, a thirst for the things of Christ and for no reward save His presence.

Down to the haunts of men she hastens, out on the highways of life she unfurls the banner of her Saviour, and with the shield of her Christ about her and upon her lips the persuasiveness of purity, she urges the multitude to the feet of her Lord. Gleaner no longer of poisoned herbs and nauseous weeds, she has become Christ's sweet harvester and loyal servant.

And I, from my presumptuous place beside the Saviour, look up into the beautiful face of the thirsty Samaritan, and, with tears in my eyes, crawl to her feet and kiss them reverently and sink down in shame;

for in the Master's eyes I can read the love I might have had. Yes, His love for her is greater than for me. She is more worthy than I.

When this strong heart first felt the pangs of hunger, husks of swine were offered her, and she did eat and became blind to all that was beautiful. But I, almost before I knew what hunger meant, was offered the Bread of Angels, which gives perfect sight and satiety; yet how often have I drunk from the pools of vanity, self-seeking, and conceit! How often have I tried to slake my thirst at the stagnant pools of resentment and retort—I who knew the beautiful Saviour and His desire for help in His vineyard —I had time to fritter away, returning to Him only when hunger pressed me hard; and she, once knowing Him, never left Him, but gathered hundreds to His cause.

Who is the guiltier—she or I?

Not she.

X

"AND HE CALLETH HIS OWN SHEEP BY NAME, AND LEADETH THEM OUT"

St. John x, 3

BUT where? Out to the pastures to feed on the sweet things of the spiritual life. Out to the joys of ministering charity. Out to the paths and byways where sorrow waits the touch of my hand, the love of my heart, the tenderness of my sympathy.

Out where?

Out on the sun-baked road. Out on the highways of life, with rugged slopes, stony paths, and few travellers. We are weary. Our feet are torn, and the way seems lonely. Looking back to the pastures we have left, we hesitate. Shall we journey back? Christ sees us hesitate and asks, "Will you also go away?"

Out where?

To the desert, alone with Christ. Everybody and everything is left behind.

Alone with Christ!

What does it mean?

It means joy, contentment, peace, and strength. But what did it mean to reach it? This cannot be written, but the watchword is "The sheep hear His voice. He goeth before them, and they *follow* Him."

Let us in turn be the shepherdesses of other sheep, bringing them through pastures, along the hillside to Christ, bringing them to Mary, the beautiful Shepherdess of souls, and the Mother of the Good Shepherd.

XI

"THOU KNOWEST NOT NOW, BUT THOU SHALT KNOW HEREAFTER"

St. John xii

THIS word of Our Lord is our only solace in times of anguish when we do not understand events. It is the only comfort when the justice of things is hidden from view.

"Thou knowest not now."

This is what makes it hard.

This is why we *worry*.

This is why we *wonder*.

This is why we grow *bitter*.

This is why we *ache*.

This is why we lose *courage*.

Because we don't know.

All through life we work in the dark, with

an occasional flash-light which only intensifies the subsequent gloom.

We *worry* lest this turn out not as we desire.

We *worry* lest this be withdrawn from us.

We *worry* lest our actions be misjudged.

We *wonder* why this should be.

We *wonder* that what to us looks unjust should be considered just by authority.

We *wonder* that beautiful actions are not recognized.

We *wonder* that success here is considered failure there, and what seems strong is rated weak.

We *grow bitter* because of an injustice done to us or to some one dear to us.

We *grow bitter* because those from whom we expected help and comfort and trust and strength have failed us.

We *grow bitter* because life is not what we pictured it to be, not sweet and loving and kind, but cold and severe and heartless.

We *ache* for a word of sympathy.

We *ache* for a support that has been withdrawn.

We *ache*—our heart is lonely.

We *lose courage*—God seems so far away.

We *lose courage* because we so often fail.

We *lose courage* because nothing seems worth while.

"But thou shalt know hereafter."

Do not worry. Do not wonder. Never grow bitter. Ache if you must, but do not lose courage.

In heaven we shall understand all. Here below we need patience—patience to wait. All is right for us if every event increases our strength to do right in spite of circumstances; to be sweet, no matter how unjust things may look; to live for God, no matter how human may be the elements about us. This all entails suffering—great suffering. But it is only because we are looking through smoked glass that the suffering is so intense.

In heaven, when we shall stand face to face with God, we shall find that all that is

most beautiful in our soul's embellishment, all that has brought our soul to its perfection, has been effected through the power we have exerted over ourselves during life, enabling us to say, no matter how things looked:

"My God, Thou knowest all things; and while events and circumstances may not be exactly of Thy shaping, still I want them to shape me according to Thy desire."

XII

PEACE

"My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, do I give unto you." St. John xiv, 27

WE are all familiar with the picture which represents the Infant Christ holding in His hand the palm branch of victory and standing amidst the animals (typifying the passions of the soul), over which He wields a sweet control. It speaks to us a beautiful lesson. It is the embodiment of our life-work; namely, the curbing and bringing under subjection the various passions of the soul.

The Lion. (Pride.)—Just pride, or the proper sense of personal dignity, is not to be destroyed. It is to be used to ennoble us.

It must prevent us from being disloyal to friend or foe. We must realize that we are loyal because Christ wishes us to be loyal. There are moments in life when loyalty, even to friends the dearest, costs much, because oftentimes we must, seemingly, be the losers in order to remain loyal. But let us remember that if loss there be, it is only material. We have enriched our heart and pleased God. This should be recompense sufficient.

Heroism is required to be loyal to those who have played us false. But Christ asks it of us. Let no amount of pressure force us to disloyalty. Why should we smirch our rectitude of character because another has wronged us? In nine cases out of ten one does not mean to wrong another. Lack of judgment, insufficient reflection, flaw of character, are very often the causes of these seeming injustices. So let us try to be sincere towards every one. Let us be able to look into the eyes of every one, saying in the depths of our soul: "I have been true to you. Never have I wronged you in thought, word,

or act." This is *charity*. It can be practised only by those who hold pride in check.

Then, too, our pride must make us magnanimous to forgive, to forget, to make allowance, to go more than half way, to yield, to throw a veil over what would bring discredit upon another.

The Bull. (Anger.)—The power of anger —that is to say, the culmination of impersonal and unselfish indignation—must be directed to its proper channel. The fire of anger must be kept alive in us, but it must be controlled. It must make us enthusiastic for all that is good and beautiful and true. It gives us the power to be patient, calm, unruffled when surroundings jar on us, when circumstances destroy our plans, or when individuals are uncongenial. Controlled anger gives us tremendous power. It is compressed strength. When deeds are demanded of us which require self-poise, we are able for them. This strength is most valuable when our duty is to refrain from

action. It is oftentimes more difficult to refrain from action than to perform some disagreeable task.

Controlled anger keeps back the quick retort, the unkind remark, the sharp criticism uttered under the pressure of wounded feelings, of rankling jealousy.

The Bear. (Self-indulgence.)—Instinctive, gross, carnal self-indulgence must be eradicated and supplanted by an instinctive, delicate, spiritual craving for the good things of God's providing. We may feed self on all that is good. We may feast our eyes on the beautiful, our mind on all that is elevating. We may feed our heart on the love of Christ and on the love of His creatures for Him. Finally we may nourish our soul on the Bread of Angels and thereby become angelic. This is self-indulgence in the true sense of the word.

The Fox. (Cunning.)—We must utilize the cunning that is in us to gain heaven, to

distinguish the true from the false, gold from dross, the values of the sanctuary from those of the world. We must prefer wealth of soul to wealth of body, and finally make use of everything to bring us to heaven by working into our souls, day by day, a truer likeness to Christ.

The Lamb. (Gentleness.)—In order that gentleness may be true, it must be strong with the strength of meekness, the power of humility, and the cheerful readiness to yield in everything where duty does not require otherwise.

When all this is accomplished, then indeed shall we carry the palm branch of victory. Our hearts will be filled to overflowing with Christ's peace, which surpasseth all understanding.

XIII

CHRIST DRIVES OUT THE BUYERS AND SELLERS

St. Matt. xxi, 12

HOW often, in travelling through the countries of Europe, the guide points out magnificent castles, fine old buildings which in their time have been the dwellings of kings, princes, and persons of nobility, now used as factories, stock exchanges, and traffic centres.

Even in our own country, in the streets of our large cities, we look up with sadness at former homes of the first families of the town now used as lodging or tenement houses. While the same stone remains and the architecture of the house is unaltered, yet the very air mourns for the bygone days and the winds sing a dirge over the tombstones of old-time glory and prestige.

It was, indeed, no wonder that our Blessed Lord cried out in His indignation: "My house shall be called the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves."

What about *our* house, *our* temple, *our* soul?

Is it a den of thieves?

Are we robbing God of anything?

Does everything within our castle belong to Him?

Our temper? Has He control of it?

Our love? Is He first in our heart?

Our hatred? But *one* hatred—hatred of sin.

Our house is meant to be a house of prayer. This is why we are Christians. This is why we have given up all that was so dear to us, that we might devote our lives to *prayer*. No one should reign in our hearts but Christ. No incense should be offered but to Him. He should be the great Power urging us on to sanctity. No other traffic will He allow to be carried on within the tem-

ple of our soul but the traffic for eternal wealth.

Let us drive out all other buyers and sellers.

XIV

"HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST DECREASE"

St. John iii, 30

THIS is our life-work, we emptying ourselves of self, and Christ filling in the gaps until we become other Christs. Now we cannot do this of ourselves, any more than in the physical world the invalid can perform her own operation. The surgeon must do it. In the spiritual life these operations are almost continual. They are not always done by the Head Surgeon, Jesus Christ. No; He gives the instruments to His apprentices, who do the work rather awkwardly at times, who perhaps make mistakes, but if we are in good disposition the wounds heal and do not fester.

Provided there be room made for Christ, what matter? Disappointments, separations,

uncongenial surroundings, seeming injustice, painful remarks, want of consideration, loneliness, and a thousand other things are the instruments that cut away, little by little, this *I*, in order that Christ may increase. The more Christ increases in us, the less importance we attach to the irksomeness of affairs, the more beauty we find in individuals, and the more loving and kind are we in our interpretation of everything about us.

Let Christ, therefore increase in us.

Let us become attractive through the superabundance of Christ's indwelling.

Let us show the world what a beautiful thing is goodness.

Let us live so gracefully the noble, true, and virtuous life that those with whom we come in contact may be eager to follow after Christ.

Let us decrease that our beautiful Lord may shine forth in us.

XV

"BEHOLD, I AM WITH YOU"

St. Matt. xxviii, 20

"There is an unction and a power in the mere silent companionship of the Blessed Sacrament which is beyond all words."

JUST as Our Lord stood quietly among His Apostles in the amazing beauty of His resurrection and said, "Handle Me and see," so does Christ abide with us in the Blessed Sacrament, that we may get to know Him, to feel at liberty to bring to Him our cares and sorrows. "Everything about Our Lord has such endurance." "Behold, I am with you *all days*." We are never alone. Christ is with us in our joys, showing us how to make use of them by pouring them into the hearts of others.

He is with us when we are sorrowful, in-

fusing strength,—not always comfort, but strength,—strength to go on bravely, strength to smile, strength to be tender, strength to sympathize.

Oh, the beauty of that smile when the heart is sad! Oh, the power of that tenderness, and the comfort to others of that sympathy, given by the soul in anguish! It must be a supreme joy to the heart of Christ to see the silent, patient cross-bearer going her rounds of ministering charity. This is the lesson learned before the Tabernacle. This is where we learn the tremendous secrets of the saints. This is where we are taught the values of things. This is where much is made impossible, as well as possible, to us:

Impossible to judge hastily.

Impossible to judge harshly.

Impossible to find fault with thousands of things.

Impossible to lord it over others.

Impossible to speak unkindly.

Impossible to show resentment.

Impossible to prefer our rights to Christ's.

It is there our soul grows silent over many things.

It is there some mysteries disappear and much is made clear to us.

It is there we learn to *wait*—to wait for God's Will to be made known—to wait for God's grace to work in other hearts—to wait for God's sweet influence to subdue our restlessness.

It is there we talk over matters only He can understand.

It is there we place our heart's most secret cares and sorrows and rise calmed and strengthened and love replenished.

It is there we are fashioned into saints.

XVI

"AND SEEING THEM LABORING IN ROWING"

St. Mark vi, 48

Christ sees us laboring!

WHAT a sweet thought! He sees us fighting with our difficulties. He sees us struggling to get rid of a bitter feeling. He sees us making an effort to smile when our heart is gloomy. He sees us patient under trying circumstances.

Christ watches!

What an inspiration! What an impulse to have our exterior sweetly religious, dignified, refined, that He may be pleased and rejoice in us.

Christ watches!

In our dealings with So-and-so, for whom He knows we have not the kindliest feeling.

Christ watches!

The great Architect sees every stone we put into our building. Jealously He watches to see that His plan is carried out. He knows the labor is great. He knows that it is not always easy to have the mortar (intention) without flaw. He knows that the weather (our humor) is sometimes a hindrance. He knows all this; but so as not to disappoint Him, we are going to keep steadily at the building; then, when the scaffolding (our body) is taken down by Death, a beautiful piece of workmanship will meet the eye of the Master. Nothing will help so much to beautify us as the appreciation that Christ watches us as we labor. Little by little, the consciousness of His presence will saturate our very lives, and our every movement will bear the impress of this influence. Our words will speak of joy and kindness; our voice, soft and mellow, will reach down into the hearts of others, bringing peace and comfort; our actions will have the touch of Christ about them, and

our thoughts will be the thoughts of Christ, noble, true, broad, and magnanimous, so that when we shall stand at last in the soft glow of the celestial light there will be no flaws, no tarnishes, but a soul despoiled of self.

XVII

CHRIST LOOKING OVER JERUSALEM

"If thou also hadst known."
St. Luke xix, 42

KNOWN what, my dearest Lord? Silently I sit at His feet, trying to feel in my soul the sadness that fills my Saviour's heart. He is disappointed, I know. There is a far-away look in His eyes. Now and then they rest upon me. I wonder am I a comfort to Him? Do I disappoint Him? Have I really climbed up to the mount to be near Christ? Or am I down in the valley, where there are lights and music and gossip and ease? Is this why Christ is disappointed? Did my Saviour look for more heroism from me? Did he expect me to find Him so attractive that I would close my eyes

to everything else and climb up steadily to Him? Have I lingered on the way to wrestle for my rights?

What *are* my rights?

I have but one—*to possess Christ.*

No one is trying to take Him from me.

No one *can* take Him unless I leave Him to run after what I falsely call "my rights."

Every created thing—esteem, applause, appreciation, position, and the like—taken from me can never deprive me of Christ. On the contrary, the absence of them very often helps to purify the atmosphere, that Christ may stand out more clearly.

Have I sat down to quench my thirst with some bitter draught of resentment, or gloominess, or unkind retort? All this time my beloved Lord looked at me sadly and murmured: "My child, if thou also hadst known. If thou hadst known that every pain, every difficulty, every hardship, accepted patiently, has wings to carry thee on with great rapidity to perfection. Take notice of nothing along thy pathway, my child, except the

heavy-laden. Lift their burdens. Walk by their side. Touch them gently. Ease their aching hearts. Bring joy to sorrowing souls, and when the journey is ended I shall be there to tell thee of the comfort thou hast given Me, and I shall show thee the multitude of souls that have come to Me through thee. Look for nothing for thyself. I shall see to that. Drop everything that could weigh thee down. Think only of Me and of My poor. Give of the wealth of thy heart, which I replenish every morning. Give; count not the cost."

XVIII

BY THE ROADSIDE

"A certain blind man sat by the roadside begging."
St. Luke xviii, 35

IT is a sultry summer day, and Christ, followed by a vast multitude, moves on towards Jericho. As they near the city a voice rings through the air, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" They turn, and there on the roadside, amid all the beauty of soft verdure and waving green, a ragged beggar sits. Impatiently the multitude bid him be silent and not trouble the Master with his cries. But the Great Almoner commands that he be brought to Him.

Jesus and the beggar meet! The beggar lifts his sightless eyes to Christ, and Christ bids him see! From that moment the beggar views everything with the light of God upon

it. He sees all in its true worth, and no longer seeks for alms where it is not to be found. Christ has bidden him see, and he sees.

What a revelation when Christ gives sight! How much suffering is prevented, and how great is the increase of love and tenderness and forgiveness!

A beggar! How pitiful! What a life! What an occupation! And with compassion, if not with disdain, I turn away, muttering to myself, "I would rather starve to death than beg."

Quite so! But am I not a beggar? Is it so long since I stretched out my hand for an alms? Time and time again do I not halt on the great thoroughfare of Life to beg from the passers-by for notice, consideration, distinction, preference, praise, love, sympathy, gratitude, friendship? Into my little tin cup do they, in pity, drop a coin or two whose rattle is music to my ears? Do they brush by me, murmuring words of compassion at

my blindness? Or do they mock me and laugh me to scorn because I, well-to-do, finely clad, should pass my time at begging? And so I rouse myself, and, weary and lonely and ragged and poor, I turn my sightless eyes to the Great Healer, to One who can give, who will give, and who longs to give.

"What wilt thou that I do for thee?" He asks.

"Lord, that I may see,—that I may see the value you set upon things, that I may see the things you prize, that I may see your will in all that touches me."

Christ bids me see. I look out over life, over the same life on which, as a poor blind beggar, my sightless eyes so often looked before, and I see beauties heretofore unnoticed and ills that must be remedied if Christ is to be glorified. I have seen Christ! What could tempt me more? So again I take up my stand upon the Road of Life. I am now Christ's beggar. What a privilege!

No longer do I hold out my little tin cup

for alms; no longer do I crave for anything save souls—souls for Christ.

I am a beggar for souls.

I am a silent beggar.

My sweet actions beg.

My kind attentions beg.

My self-forgetfulness begs.

My forgiveness begs.

My every movement begs for, and, I pray, may attract to, Christ. And so it is that after a long, long time a day comes when, on the Roadside of Life, I hear the footsteps of Christ, who commands that I be brought to Him; and kneeling down before my great, sweet Lord, He takes me by the hand and bids me see, and I gaze into that Face which is to be my joy for all eternity.

Happy beggars of Christ! Happy they who, standing on the Roadside of Life, are blind to the gay pageantry of wealth, applause, and fame, but whose eyes are ever open to the need of souls, to the spiritual wealth hidden deep in the mines of retire-

ment, obscurity, and submission, in search of the applause of Christ, who, as we journey on towards Him, purifies our vision until there is but a shimmer of mist between us and eternity.

XIX

CRUSHED? AND THEN?

I CROSSED the road and went into the wood. It was cool in there, and I was hot. My soul was hot. Anger and bitterness, resentment and indignation—I was going to say hatred, but no, it was not that—fought in my heart for mastery. I had been wronged. I had met with injustice and my whole soul was struggling to be released from this body which held it captive amidst so much that looked untrue, unfair, unholy. The wood was one mass of beauty, but I was blind to all loveliness. It was spring, and the gay foliage overhead bowed and rustled in the cool breeze that fanned my burning cheek. Tufts of moss peeped out from under the dead, damp leaves of winter. At my

feet a tiny brook murmured softly to the waving grass along its border. Here I stopped to lean against an elm tree whose branches overshadowed me so completely that not so much as a stray sunbeam filtered through. I did not want the sunlight. It seemed only to make sport of my clouded spirits. I did not wish to hear the music of the brook; the discord of my soul was sweeter far.

Alone I stood. Alone I pondered. Alone I planned my petty revenge—a spiteful word, a cutting look, or a chilly, icy silence.

Softly there crept over and surrounded me the exquisite perfume of violets. How I loved them! Whence came this fragrance? Not a violet had I seen on my way to this sheltered nook. Still standing, I looked about me. No sign of the little flower met my eye, and yet the perfume grew more intense. I stopped to look behind me, when lo! beneath my feet was a clump of leaves crushed and bruised and its tender blossoms breathing out their hearts' sweetest fra-

grance. I stooped to raise their drooping heads and held them tenderly in my hands.

"Dear, beautiful violets, I have crushed you! This perfume is your return!"

What of *mine?* Will a flower make return so sweet, and I would pour out bitterness? I to whom Christ comes every day! Will I not break my box of ointment at my Saviour's feet,—I who am daily filled with the fragrance of my Saviour's love?

When pressure is brought to bear on this heart of mine, will I not prove to the world at large that Christ is not a failure, but that He rules supreme over my passions and inclinations?

So, filled with the fragrance of Christ's little flower, carrying in my heart the sweet lesson of my violet, I left the wood, recrossed the road and met the eye of her who had dealt me so painful a blow, but the return was not a petty revenge, nor a spiteful word, nor a cutting look, nor an icy silence. No; Christ had conquered!

XX

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER

My dear N——

YOU ask me to write a few lines on suffering, and for weeks I have wished to do it for you. But in spite of the fact that grief and sorrow and pain surround us on every side, and that our own poor hearts have felt, now and again, the pressure of their weight,—in spite of this, I hesitate; for sorrow and grief and pain are so sacred that, next to the Sacraments, I know of nothing more set apart and consecrated.

Suffering in itself is not beautiful. The tools of the sculptor, the mallet of the stonecutter, the brush of the artist,—none of these is beautiful. Yet they produce exquisite treasures of art. Without them, beauties the

rarest would lie buried, hidden away, undeveloped and unformed. Without suffering, there is no sanctity. Without tools and brush and mallet, there is no art. Tools in the hand of the artist who loves his art bring life and beauty from the cold, hard marble. Tools in the hand of him who rebels against effort, who begrudges the time spent at his work, do little more than hack the block and fail to strike the hidden beauty within. Suffering in the hand of a connoisseur, in the hand of one who knows its value, who knows its power, brings the living, acting Christ from the fleshly tablets of the heart.

A Cross is one thing.

A Crucifix is another.

Look at the procession of humanity. Look at Youth and Old Age. Look at them marching on towards eternity, each with his cross—there is no one without it—but on how many do we see the Crucified? Let us kneel in adoration before the great, the heroic, the magnanimous, the beautiful hearts that have so loved the Cross that they

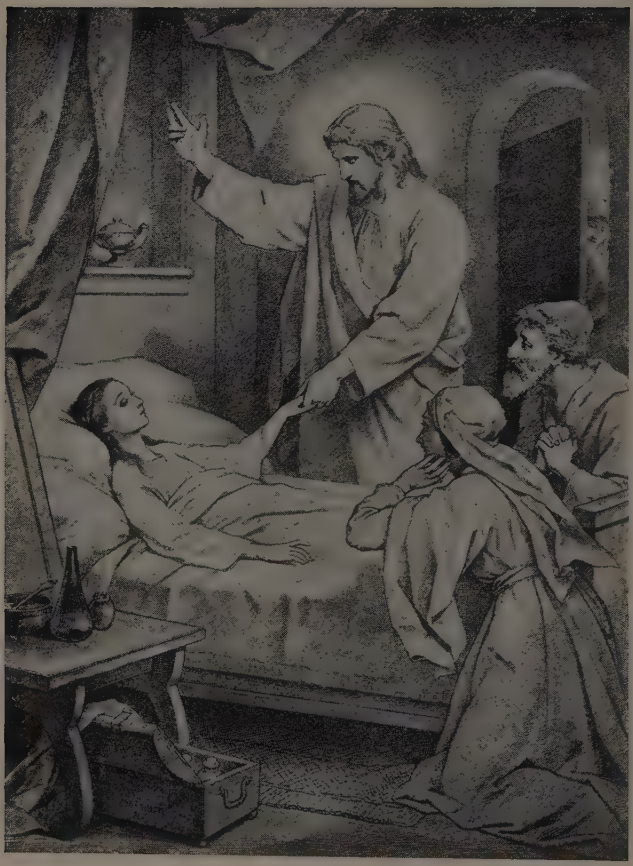
have found therein the hidden Christ. Let us kiss their feet; let us kiss them reverently and with awe,—the feet of those who, in their eagerness to find Christ, have used the tools of sorrow,—tools that come in every shape, large and small, sharp and dull; tools of death, sickness, failure, misunderstanding, infidelity of those we cherished, suspicion, mistrust, injustice, and thousands of others,—yes, let us kiss their feet, for they are holy.

Suffering has made them so. Suffering has made them strong, tender, loving, sympathetic, joyful.

What is there greater, what is there more sublime than the soul that has spent her life carving from her cross the delicate figure of Christ? Surely this is success! Is there any other? God grant, my dearly loved N——, that nothing along the Road of Life may hinder your work on your masterpiece. There is no injustice, no misunderstanding, when seen in the light of the Crucifix. Truly

it is the explanation of every detail of our life.

When we shall stand face to face with Jesus Christ, when the veil is drawn aside, what a joy it will be to our Divine Saviour to find His Image resplendent in our soul! What a happiness to us to know that we have pleased Him to whom our love was plighted years ago, and to whom we promised fidelity, regardless of the cost. When we shall truly see that Beautiful Lord, when we shall fully realize for what our life was given us—when we shall behold the mansion reserved for our life-work, do you think we shall regret the tools? No, indeed. Let us kneel to receive them now; let us kiss them; let us look up to the Crucified and thank Him, and with our heart bleeding and our soul in anguish let us take the tool in our trembling hand and fashion—Our Beautiful Lord!



XXI

"ONLY BELIEVE"

St. Mark v, 36

WHAT a surprise it must have been to that young girl when she opened her eyes and saw Jesus standing by her bedside! How beautiful He must have looked! How she must have loved Him then and there, and what a sorrow to her when He went away and left her to live on without Him! That glimpse of Him was to be her strength, and the withdrawal of His sensible Presence her purification. It is these glimpses, these rifts in the clouds, that give us the courage to go on. It is in these awakenings, after the struggle of death, after the destruction of some fond hope, after the control of some inordinate passion, that our eyes are opened and we find Christ standing by. It is only

momentary, though. Again we must return to the struggles, after each one of which our faith assures us that Christ is nearer to us. Each struggle means a little bit of death to self and an increase of Christ, until, *if we will it so,* all of self dies and Christ reigns supreme!

Then what joy when we shall see Him at our bedside, bidding us come with Him to enjoy His friendship for all eternity!

XXII

THE INVITATION

St. Matt. iv, 19

I

IN the early morning, as the first streaks of light lit up the beautiful Sea of Galilee, Simon and Andrew were casting nets into the sea. Jesus stood on the shore, watching them as they worked.

As our Divine Lord tarries on the seashore of my life, does He see me casting nets into the sea?

For what am I fishing?

For the pearl of great price?

Or for minnows?

Am I fishing for my own will, or for the will of the beautiful Watcher on the seashore?

Am I fishing for satisfaction in food, or for contentment in Christ?

Am I fishing for the appreciation of my companions, or for Christ's approval?

Am I fishing for the esteem of men, or for the applause of Christ?

I wonder what Our Lord thinks of me as He stands watching me while I cast my nets morning after morning?

II

"COME after Me, and I will make you to be fishers of men."

What a bargain!

How beautifully humble of Christ to ask us to follow Him; and, for fear we should not find Him attractive enough, He promises us a reward.

Fishers of men!

Fisher of my own soul, first of all. Catching it for Christ. Catching my quick word, taking it in the nets of patience, detachment,

sweetness to all about me for Christ's sake.

This done, I learn from Our Beloved Lord how to be a fisher of other souls, learning from Him His great art of bringing peace and calm to all with whom I live, never allowing my manner to arouse anger in the hearts of others, or irritation or ill-will. This means great self-control and the sweet gentleness of Christ, our lovable Lord.

III

"And immediately leaving their nets" (and taking Christ's—Christ's way of doing things), "they followed Christ."

Small wonder!

Small wonder, indeed, that they should have left *their* way of doing things. Small wonder that they left *their* nets and took Christ's. Small wonder that they ceased fishing for the lower things of life, when Christ promised them the souls of men.

In order that we may be successful in our fishing, let us ask Christ to give us attractive

bait—His ways, His manner of doing, His tact, His patience, His forgiveness, His forbearance, His generosity, His strength.

No matter the cost, no matter the weariness, no matter the discouraging moments, no matter what comes our way, provided we gather in souls for Christ. It is the good we have done on earth that we shall find in Heaven—nothing more; and this good is done only through our individual goodness—our union with God—not through any notice or consideration that may be shown us.

Let us then strive to be holy.

Therefore, let us expect and be prepared to endure suffering, for Christ's sake.

XXIII

"BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!"

ST. JOHN i, 36

ONE morning, before the crowds had time to gather about him, St. John stood by the Jordan, with two of his dearly loved disciples, Andrew and John. In the distance, standing alone, was Jesus. As soon as St. John saw Him he recognized Him. With all the love of his strong nature, with all the generosity of his loyal heart, he turns to his two devoted friends and says, "Behold the Lamb of God!" And John and Andrew left him to go to Jesus!

What were the feelings of John when he saw Jesus? Jesus, who was to outshine him, who was to lessen his fame, who was to attract to Himself his friends?

My heart is too puny to penetrate the magnificence of John's heart.

My love is too shallow to understand the depth of his love for Christ and his magnanimous devotion to his friends.

Perhaps I may be honest enough to answer some questions put to myself:

How do I feel, what effect has it on my actions when I meet some one whose ways, whose attractions are superior to mine? I, perhaps, have fed my soul on the consideration won for me by my talents. I have basked in the sunshine of the smiles of those about me, buoyed up by their approval and appreciation.

Now all this has slipped out of my life; the smile, the appreciation, the applause have vanished, and I—how do I feel? How do I act?

Do I take refuge before the Blessed Sacrament and in the silence of the Tabernacle do I hear the voice of Christ saying, "My child, I have not taken your talents from

you, but I have permitted them to *seem* less, that you may draw close to Me"?

The finer one's nature, so much the finer the objects on which one places one's affections; and so, while aching and grieving at loss of fame, appreciation, success, consideration, after a time one rises above the loss of the lesser things and seeks comfort in the delight of friendship, when lo! one's John and Andrew vanish to follow a stronger Light, a finer Personality.

When this happens to me, how do I feel? How do I act? Do I, in the midst of the pain, between the sobs of my aching heart,—do I look into the face of Christ? Do I, through the mist of tears, see my Beloved Lord calling from me those whom I loved so dearly, that He may find me standing *alone* and detached,—not empty of affection and love, but stripped of self-seeking in my friendships? Can I feel bitter or hard or unkind towards those who have left me, when I know Christ approves of my abandonment? Can I look at them coldly or

refuse to help them, or close my heart against them, when I understand that Christ is emptying me?

No, indeed. I ache, it is true. I grieve. I am in anguish, but I love them more truly, and Christ fills up the void that He has made.

Now I rest on nothing save Christ. Am I *sure* of this?

I have still one sacrifice to make. St. John was cast into prison. What about his reputation? He who was looked upon as the Christ, Elias, a prophet, was closed within a prison to await his death, while Christ seemed unmindful of him.

My reputation has never been great, but what little I have, I treasure. To-day I am misjudged, misunderstood. It seems impossible to rectify matters. How do I feel? How do I act? Do I take refuge before the altar? Yes, but Christ seems not there! Most terrible of sufferings! My eyes see nothing, my ears hear nothing, and my heart is overwhelmed with anguish.

Ah! if my eyes could see, they would

behold the approving smile of Christ. If my ears could hear, they would catch His unspoken word of love; and if my heart were not so suffering, it would know that the last sacrifice has come, that my life-work is accomplished. Christ has at last full possession of my heart.

Standing in the full light of eternity, where mysteries are no more, I shall look upon the struggles of life as the pearls of great price, the gold without alloy, and I shall possess treasures that grow not old, which the moth cannot consume nor the rust destroy.

Is there any sacrifice too great for such a recompense?

XXIV

A COUNSEL

"If thou wilt be perfect"

St. Matt. xix, 21

IT was only a suggestion, but it pained Christ that it was not accepted. He had watched this young man as he journeyed towards Him down the dusty road. He thought within Himself, "Here is one who mingles with the rich and the gay and the worldly; he can be an instrument unto good." And so His heart went out to him and yearned to have his help.

Christ and the rich young man stand face to face!

Christ, the most beautiful of men,—Christ, in the midst of His poor, turns to the rich young man and asks an alms!

Christ and I have stood face to face so

many times! Christ and I have been heart to heart so many times! Christ has so often asked of me an alms! Out of the wealth of my opportunities He has asked of me a contribution towards sanctity!

Have I turned away?

The rich young man was *almost* perfect! Think how Christ must have loved him! Think, too, of the disappointment it was to Christ when the young man clung so greedily to his possessions. He turned away from Christ, and, sad at heart, re-entered his home, returned to enjoy what Christ had suggested his giving to the poor. He could not wait for the treasure in heaven. The sad eye of Christ followed him down the lane to the bend in the road where he was lost to view.

And I—what do I cling to? Does the treasure in heaven seem so far away that I must needs cling to the tinsel about me and disappoint Christ?

"Go sell what thou hast!"

In spite of the big sale I made when I first met Christ, in spite of the few possessions I trade for eternal goods,—in spite of this, there are every day other sales all along the route. We are trading false pearls for true, counterfeit coin for genuine; but the trouble is that the false pearls *look* true to us—the counterfeit coin *seems* genuine, and so we hesitate.

Honor, appreciation, applause, renown, distinction, consideration, all this we crave, and we shall have it in heaven; so let us sell it here on earth. No praise here, no appreciation, no applause, nothing here but Christ, and even He may be hidden. Does this make me sad? Will I turn away and content myself with less than what Christ suggests to me? Will I sadden Christ? No, my beloved Lord, you shall have every iota of my being. Give me no rest until I have sacrificed to you all that will make of my soul a complete holocaust such as I wished it to be when I first plighted my vows at your feet.

XXV

REEDS

"What went ye out into the desert to see? A reed shaken with the wind?" St. Luke vii, 24

ST. JOHN had grown strong in the desert. There is nothing which so tends to strengthen the soul and give to it the ascendancy over the body as a life spent in the desert, a life devoid of what the body naturally craves. This is what made the philosophers great; and had they added to this greatness the elevation of the soul to God, and had they lived the desert life for His sake, then indeed would they have been saints.

It was no wonder that Our Blessed Lord asked with so much assurance of the disciples of St. John what they had gone out

into the desert to see—"A reed shaken with the wind?"

No matter what be our position and surroundings, there is not a moment when the winds of life are not blowing about us, and there is no surer test of our progress in the spiritual life than the effect of these winds upon the steadiness of our souls towards God.

Let us examine these makers and destroyers of sanctity.

St. Paul says (Romans ix), "Who, then, shall separate us from the love of Jesus Christ?"

I. *"Shall tribulation?"* Shall the petty annoyances that daily blow across my path make me irritable, make me impatient?

Do I say a quick word?

Do I sulk?

Do I allow my work to suffer?

Do I murmur?

Or do I steady myself so there shall be no shaking of the reed, no wavering from

the determination to make use of everything to strengthen and beautify my soul?

II. *"Shall distress?"* Shall anxiety, shall uncertainty unsteady me, make me preoccupied, forgetful of sweet thoughtfulness for others, unmindful of the cheerful smile to the passer-by, neglectful of the kind word to some hungry little heart?

Or shall I lay my care in the lap of my dearest Lord and let it not break in upon my life of charity?

III. *"Shall famine?"* Shall hunger for distraction, for relaxation, for sympathy, for love, for prestige, hunger for anything outside of Christ crucified,—shall this drive me to eat at the table of earthly monarchs?

I hope not.

IV. *"Shall nakedness?"* Shall poverty, shall loss of everything dear to me turn me to seek for adornment from the bargain counters of the world? Shall loss of position, loss of fame, loss of popularity, loss of honor, loss even of my reputation bend me and crush me to the ground?

Or shall I stand erect, my eyes riveted on Christ, and in the rarefied atmosphere of desert mountain-heights, while the blood oozes from ears and nostrils, shall I murmur my prayer of trust and resignation?

God grant I may!

V. *"Shall danger?"* Shall fear of criticism, human respect make me yield to compromise, to double-dealing, to disloyalty, to courting favor, to neglect of those to whom I owe gratitude and love; shall danger to selfish aims frighten me into paying homage to anything unworthy of my calling?

What a coward!

VI. *"Shall persecution and the sword"* make me cry out for mercy? Shall I, when misunderstood, misjudged, humiliated, scorned, reviled, persecuted by those who are nearest to me; when cut by the sword of unkindness and calumny, shall I persecute in turn and thrust the dagger into the heart of him who holds the sword?

The heathen did this.

VII. *"Shall life or death,* sickness or

health" separate me from the love of Jesus Christ?

When in the full bloom of life and health, shall I glory in all I can accomplish and drink greedily of the cup of power which ever follows success? Or shall I lay it all at the feet of Christ, in humble gratitude for His goodness?

When sickness binds my hands and feet and brain shall I keep my heart steadily lifted to Christ, and shall I glory in the fact that my inaction, my apparent uselessness, my necessary encroachment upon the care and time of others is the greatest holocaust I can offer to the Lord of my heart?

VIII. *"Shall angels, principalities,* powers, might, height, depth,"—in a word, when all the wealth of intellect is mine, with the applause and notoriety and fame that follow in its suite, shall I then carry in my bosom the heart of a little child and be ready at any moment to lay these God-given toys on the altar of sacrifice, to be consumed to the

honor and glory of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

This was St. John's attitude. This is why Christ spoke of him in such glowing terms. If St. John did it, if St. Paul gloried in having done it—

Why cannot I?

We are all reeds; but when the sap of Christ, the grace of God, courses through every fibre, no wind or storm of time can break or shake us.

XXVI

ONLY A VOICE

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord!" St. John i, 23

YES, it was only a voice, but it was a voice that rang in harmony with the voice of Christ. It was a voice that cried from the wilderness, and it was understood by the sinner and the saint.

How far did it travel? To Judea? To the country about the Jordan? To Jerusalem? Yes,—but farther still. It vibrated against the souls of men. Yea, it entered into those souls and moved them to love, to penitence, to holiness.

This voice that rang so clear, struck its chord from the depths of a soul that lived and breathed but for its Friend and Lover,

Jesus Christ. No wonder all men turned to him. No wonder they left their cities of wealth and pleasure and ease and hurried out to the desert to listen to a man who could feed on locusts and wild honey because his soul found its nourishment in Jesus Christ. Think of the great powers for good we should be if our souls were in harmony with Christ, if our voice rang out from the wilderness,—the wilderness wherein nothing grew of the world or of self, but where patience and love and tenderness urged all hearts to lay their burdens at the feet of Christ!

Let us live with Christ in the wilderness. Let us live but for Him, think but of His interests so that we may gather in a harvest of souls for the tireless Reaper — Jesus Christ Our Lord.

XXVII

THE LIGHTS ALONG THE SHORE

St. John xxi, —

THE lovely Sea of Galilee slept, soothed by the fragrance from the orange-blossomed hills. The paschal moon hung in silent splendor over the peaceful lake, touched the trees and slender grasses, and shed a wealth of glory on the rugged slopes of distant mountain-peaks. Here and there along the shore, nestled among the hills, were the white cottages of the fishermen, with their glimmer of lights at the window. Two hundred cubits from the shore lay anchored a lonely fishing-craft with yet more lonely hearts aboard. A gloom had settled on their souls, a gloom so deep that naught could brighten or dispel,—they missed their Master so! How often had they walked on yonder beach, listened to the stories of His kingdom,

and watched Him as He climbed the lonely mounts to pray, while they, weariness overmastering love, slumbered beneath His gaze!

Where is He now? Will He not come to them, walking on the sea, as He did so oft in days of yore? Will He not lift this burden from their hearts and whisper some sweet words of peace?

How fruitless all had been since then! Even this very night how vainly they had worked! The hours wore on; one by one the lights along the shore dimmed, flickered, and died. The moon dropped behind the dark-rimmed hills. There was naught to break the gloom save the glimmer from the oil-lamp at the prow of the little fishing-craft. Thus, weary and heartsore, they passed the night until, rousing themselves to renewed effort, they again flung their nets into the limpid waters and watched and waited as they had done all through the night.

Hark! a note floats over the sea,—the

voice of One who stands upon the shore and calls to them,

"Children, have you any meat?"

They answer, "No."

O lonely disciples of Jesus, know you not His voice? Weary disciples of Jesus, feel you not His love?

"Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find."

A pause, and the disciple whom Jesus loved recognized his Lord.

"It is the Lord!"

One moment, and St. Peter, his heart aflame with love, his eyes lit up with rapture, falls in adoration at the feet of his Lord. Forgetful of the weary night, unmindful of their fruitless task, the little band, with joyful-breaking hearts, group about their loving Lord and entreat Him to tarry with them yet a little while. Sweetly He looks down into their hungry eyes, and with a tenderness that only He can show bids them, "Come and dine."

There, upon the sea-washed beach, a ruddy

fire glows, built by His dear hands, the selfsame hands that had, in the hamlets round about, touched so tenderly the wretched things of life. Jesus serves them and feeds their hungry, lonely hearts with words of love and hope, while they, in silent adoration, tell their tale of worship, joy, and trust, and sing their hymn of everlasting praise.

Thus it is that our frail barks plough the rough waters of life and cast anchor in the shifting seas of care and responsibility. It was sweet and calm and peaceful on the lovely shore of home, surrounded by love and devotion and sympathy, but a yearning took possession of our hearts, an irresistible longing to leave all that was beautiful and go out into the deep to throw our nets, to labor, and to garner treasures from the waters of retirement and prayer. So we cut our moorings, pushed away from shore, and sailed out amid flying colors, with the enthu-

siasm of youthful hearts to ease the sorrow of parting.

For years all was bright. The lights of success, appreciation, gratitude, trust, sympathy, and love kindled a glow in our hearts. The splendor of God's presence made daylight of darkness; for what were storms and choppy seas, with such a Beacon Light? What were anxious moments and weary days, with all the wealth of love and trust and sympathy to encourage and buoy up our flagging spirits? These were God's beautiful lights that threw their shimmer upon our life-sea, that our voyage might be sweet and easy. We enjoyed them, we loved them, and we flashed back our joy and love and gratitude.

But it is not always so. A time comes when the lights about us disappear one by one; and as each burns low, flickers, and dies, the anguish of the heart intensifies. How well we realize then the warmth and brightness those lights had thrown upon our life-work! How easy were all things difficult,

how sweet the bitter, how smooth the rugged ways! Now dull and duller grow the lights, and lonely grow our souls. Yes; lonely, but strong.

If we could peer through the gloom, we should see our loving Lord placing His hand upon the lights, one by one, in proportion to our strength to live without them. When all are out He shades our eyes from the Light of His Presence, and we are in total darkness save for the faint glow of faith struggling for life within us. Oh, who can tell the excruciating anguish of this desolation! Who but those who have passed through it, who have sat in the deepest gloom, straining their weary, aching eyes for just one ray from the old familiar lights,—who but they can tell of the exquisite joy at the sound of the Voice of Christ as it floats over the dark waters of the soul!

"Children, have you any meat?"

"No, Lord; we are starving. We have not tasted for months,—aye, perhaps for years."

Ah, this is what Christ wants! We are

now empty vessels, waiting but for His filling. We have died to rise to a new, wonderful life of helpfulness. He will fill us with His great powers for good. He will tell us where to throw our nets.

"Cast your nets on the right side, and you shall find."

Now it is easy! Now we understand the meaning of the darkness, the gloom, the loneliness. It was then, unconsciously, we had been mending our nets, strengthening them, enlarging them, so that when our weather-beaten ship shall sail into harbor it shall lay at the feet of its loving Pilot its treasures innumerable, and the dear voice of the Master will bid us, "Come and dine."

Then shall we sit at the table of the King, feasting our eyes on His beautiful face and our hearts on eternal love!

XXVIII

"BUT CHRIST DID NOT SHOW HIMSELF UNTIL THE FOURTH WATCH OF THE NIGHT"

St. Matt. xiv, 25

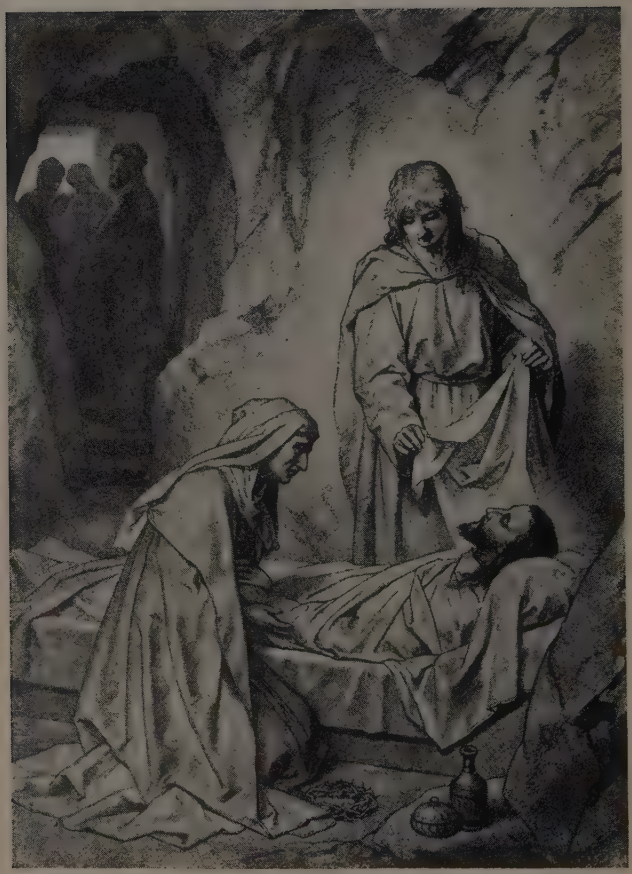
THERE was no encouragement, no comfort. We were exhausted; we were well-nigh desperate; we were wretchedly depressed. Why not give up? We never looked for this in life. We never realized that things could come to such a pass.

Oh, the anguish of these moments, when, in the midst of struggle, depression, hopelessness, Christ's sensible presence is absent! Our companions try to help us, but their very wonder at our state is a pain to us. Christ delays to come. He is watching, though, but He wants to test us. Let Him not be disappointed. This is a moment of tremendous grace. If we go through it, we

shall have grown almost herculean in our strength. These are the moments that disentangle us from many of the trappings that weaken and weigh us down. These are the moments which, *after* they are passed, find our vision clearer and our appreciation of the value of things truer.

Then He comes to us, walking on the sea, and says: "Fear not. It is I. Be not afraid." And we whisper to ourselves, "It is the Lord." Yes, then it is easy. Then we understand. Then we wonder that we should have doubted. Then we are ashamed of our wavering. What a beautiful tribute to Christ would have been our trust! So we determine that the next time we shall understand; that when the waves of our life run high, when our heart-boat is tossed and torn by the sea, we shall understand that Christ is near, watching us, and shall fight fearlessly and cheerfully. Then, little by little, troubles and crosses serve "to clamp the trust that shall steady our hearts" in Christ, and, like St. Peter, we shall say, "Lord, bid me come

to Thee upon the water." What a joy to hear Him say, "Come," and we go, really walk upon the sea, really do wonders until some tremendous sorrow-wave dashes up between us and Christ, and for a moment we lose heart and, again like St. Peter, cry out, "Lord, save me!" And immediately (that word *immediately* is so full of love!) stretching forth His hand, He takes hold of me, and when He is come into my heart-boat the wind ceases. It is only after Christ has taken—has been given—full control of our heart-boat that the winds cease. This is the struggle of our life,—to let Christ rule. So long as He must come over the water to us there will be lonely struggles; but when, through great generosity on our part, we have emptied our lives of everything that could raise a tempest in the heart, then Christ will sit at the helm, and the waves may toss, and the winds blow about the boat, but we are calm, for we have no cause to fear. Christ sits at the helm and rules.



XXIX

WAY OF THE CROSS

I

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

CHRIST was tried before Caiaphas, Pilate, and Annas. He was falsely accused. He was mocked. He was struck on the face, during the trial, by a soldier. Not once did He make a quick reply. Not once did He show impatience. In the midst of it all He bore Himself nobly. He was clothed in peace.

In what do we resemble Christ? In our silence under reproof? In our patience when things go contrary to our liking? In our quiet, gentle manner towards those whose ways are disagreeable?

Let us ask the grace to be like Christ.

II

CHRIST TAKES HIS CROSS

CHRIST had spent the night in prison among vulgar men. They had blindfolded Him. They had placed a reed in His hand and bowed before Him, saying, "Hail! King of the Jews!" They spat in His face and struck Him blows. Then, in the early morning, He was tied to a post and whipped until there was not a sound spot on His body. In this condition He was given His cross to carry. Throughout it all Christ spoke not a word!

Let us meditate on the tremendous strength required for this silence! And we! Have we murmured over trifles! How much we complain! How restless we grow under the slightest thing that chafes us! Each time we murmur, each time we complain, we lose strength.

Let us ask the grace to be like Christ.

III

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

JESUS falls under the weight of His suffering, from the exhaustion of His body. There was no one in that crowd to speak to Him one word of sympathy. This in itself must have been a keen pain to the exquisitely delicate heart of Christ. He who had poured out upon the suffering and sorrowful the wealth of His tender compassion.

Do we touch the hearts about us with delicacy? We cannot tell what the gayest among them may be suffering. We cannot guess the hidden sorrow of those who are, perhaps, repulsive to us.

Let us ask of Our Blessed Lord to put balm upon our words and the touch of kindness in our actions, that our life may be one of sympathy.

IV

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

When Our Blessed Lady last saw Christ, He was beautiful. Now, that face, which to look upon was to love, is scarcely visible. The eyes are dimmed with blood—those eyes which had looked into the depth of hearts and brought to them peace and forgiveness. His lips are dry and parched—those lips that had spoken love and hope and sympathy. And Mary looked in anguish on her Son, and could not lift a hand to help Him.

Have we ever ached to be a help to others? Is there any one in the world to whom we are a help? A strength? An impulse to higher things? Are we helping as many as God intends us to help?

Let us ask the grace to be like Christ.

V

SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS

FEARING that Christ would become exhausted before He reached Calvary, and that the crowd would then be cheated of the sight of looking upon the Crucifixion, they called Simon of Cyrene to help Jesus carry the cross.

What a privilege to be permitted to carry the cross with Christ! How happy we should have been had we been chosen! Still, every day of our lives we have the opportunity to pick up the splinters of Christ's cross by wearing a smile for the sake of the hearts that are bending under the crosses of life.

Let us ask the grace to be like Christ.

VI

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

VERONICA braved the crowd and dared to show compassion and love for Christ, who was looked upon as a fool, and she was rewarded by having the impress of the face of Christ left on her towel.

Are we ever ashamed to show our loyalty to Christ? Do we hesitate, through fear of ridicule, to do what we know to be right? Are we ever influenced to believe that the restrictions of His law are foolish?

Let us ask the grace to be like Christ.

VII

CHRIST FALLS THE SECOND TIME

No one helps Christ to rise!

Let us strive to lift Him by lifting His creatures. Never let us look down on those who have fallen. Look down on the sin,—yes, but not on the sinner. Be compassionate towards him.

Let us ask the grace to be like Christ.

VIII

CHRIST COMFORTS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

No one could give such sweet comfort as Christ, because no one had suffered so much. No one could touch the heart so tenderly as Christ, because no one had loved so deeply. No one could give so much strength under suffering as Christ, because no one was so unselfish in his sympathy.

Do we seek sympathy, or do we give it? Do we seek to be loved, or do we love? Do we lean on others, or do we try to grow strong, that others may lean upon us?

Let us ask the grace to be like Christ.

IX

CHRIST FALLS THE THIRD TIME

Let us be a help to those who fall under the pressure of temptation. Let us never condemn the fallen. God will do that. Let us never be heard to pass judgment on the actions of others. It is so easy to make mistakes that injure forever.

Let us ask the grace to be like Christ.

X

CHRIST IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

CHRIST'S garments were torn from His bleeding body. The wounds of the flagellation were opened. This was in reparation for the sins of the body!

Immortification.
Luxury.
Soft living.
Indecent and suggestive dress.
Immorality.

Have we ever failed under any of these heads?

Let us ask the grace to be like Christ.

XI

CHRIST IS CRUCIFIED

The hands that had been lifted in blessing were nailed to the cross. Those hands that had rested tenderly on the leper, opened the eyes of the blind, touched broken hearts,—those hands were fastened with nails.

The feet that had trodden the streets and byways of Galilee on errands of mercy and love were pinned to the cross.

This was the return made to Him for His life of devotedness!

Can we complain because we are not appreciated? Can we find fault because others are preferred to us?

Let us ask the grace to be like Christ.

XII

CHRIST HANGS FOR THREE HOURS

And during those three hours no words, save those of mercy and of love, escaped His lips. Think of the beauty of a heart which, under the pressure of sorrow, gives out nothing but tenderness and overflowing love! Think of the magnificence of the heart that holds nothing but sweetness when saturated with the anguish of pain!

Then let us look at our own hearts. Is there any difference?

Let us ask the grace to be like Christ.

XIII

CHRIST IS LAID IN THE ARMS OF HIS BLESSED MOTHER

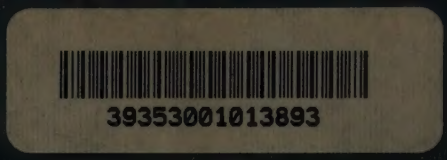
MARY was the strongest of women, and she was also the tenderest. Could Mary's silent sorrow have been sculptured in granite, no more beautiful type could there have been of the strength of a woman's heart and the tenderness of her love.

Let us ask of Our Blessed Lady to obtain for us the strength to bear sweetly—and, above all, silently—the little vexations of every-day life, so that when our great cross comes, we may carry it nobly and bravely.

XIV

CHRIST IS LAID IN THE TOMB

Let us pray that when our bodies are laid in the tomb, they may be the bodies of saints, —sweet saints; saints that have made others happy, and thereby made them better; saints that have been living proofs of the beauty and attractiveness of virtue, and thus have brought many hearts to the feet of Christ; saints that have woven into their lives the characteristics of Christ,—His tenderness, His love, His sympathy, His beautiful forgiveness.


39353001013893

CO-AWL-572